



**PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION  
INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER (IRC)  
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# BEING MUSLIM IN AMERICA

**Ramadan Outreach Issue  
August-September 2010**

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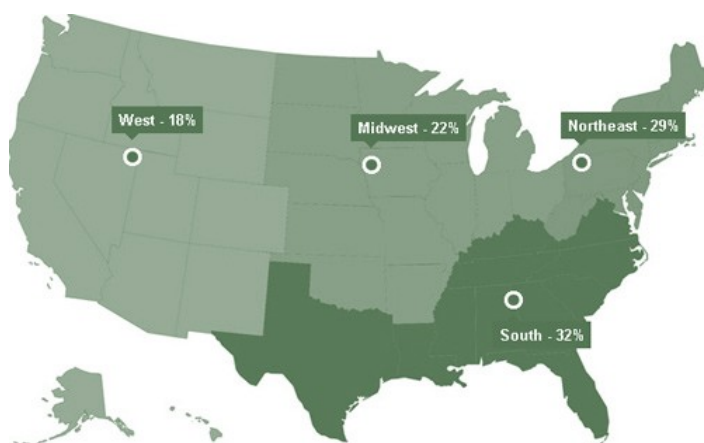
**Special points of interest:**

- **Teaching Tolerance**  
Tolerance.org helps educators promote respect for differences and an appreciation of diversity. Check this link <http://www.america.gov/can-tolerance-be-taught.html>
- **A Patchwork Culture**  
The United States is a patchwork of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. The growing diversity of the U.S. population shapes how Americans identify themselves. Check this link <http://www.america.gov/identity.html>

## ISLAM IN THE UNITED STATES

The Islamic faith, whose followers are called Muslims, is one of the three theistic world religions, along with Judaism and Christianity. The first sizable group of Muslims arrived in the U.S. from Lebanon in the early 1900's. Later waves of Muslim immigration have brought Pakistanis, Indians, Arabs, and Iranians, among others.

There are about 1,600 mosques in the U.S. but membership estimates vary greatly, in part because many Muslims are new immigrants or recent converts. Some Muslim groups claim as many as 6 or 7 million American Muslims, but recent surveys by the U.S. Census and the Pew Forum of Religion and Public Life have yielded estimates between 1 and 2 million. Regardless of overall numbers,



**Regional Distribution of Muslims in the United States: South 32%; Northeast 29%; Midwest 22%; West 18%.**

most Muslims reside in cities in the Northeast and industrial Midwest. Observances vary from one center to another, depending on the nationality of its adherents and their length of residence in the United States. In general, recent immigrants

are more conservative and follow Islamic ritual and custom more closely.

Source: Wright, John W. *The New York Times 2010 Almanac* (Penguin Reference, 2010), 420.

## A MULTICULTURAL RAMADAN

The world's 1.5 billion Muslims will observe the month of Ramadan in different ways, blending their own cultural customs with Islamic traditions of prayer and fasting. In the United States alone, Muslims come from more than 80 countries and represent a mosaic of ethnic, linguistic, ideological, social and economic groups.

Although the principal teachings of Ramadan remain consistent, the fusion between religious traditions and diverse cultures embodies the interconnectivity and diffusion of a modern, globalized world.

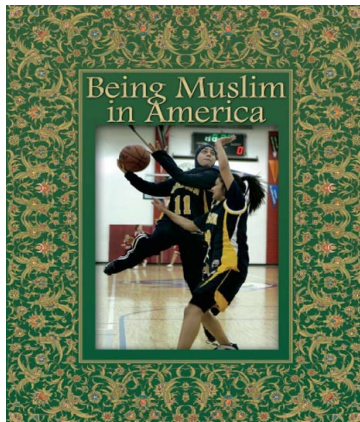
Related Feature: A Multicultural Ramadan from America.gov is available online at:

<http://www.america.gov/ramadan.html>





## E-Journal USA: Being Muslim in America



America.gov E-Journal March 2009

The young women pictured on our cover are both Muslim. They live near Detroit, Michigan, in a community with many Arab-American residents. Each expresses her faith in her own way, with a combination of traditional and modern dress. Here, they compete fiercely on the basketball court in a sport that blends individual skills and

team effort. They - along with the other men, women, and children in this publication - demonstrate every day what it is like to be Muslim in America.

Inside This Publication:

- **Stories and photos**

- **American With a Muslim Soul**

A leader in the interfaith movement writes about what he calls the American ethos - the mixing of tolerance and reverence.

- **Building a Life in America**

With freedom, faith, and hard work, each successive wave of immigrants has added its distinctive contributions to the American story. And today, this story is the Muslim-American story too.

- **Profiles**

Artist - Heba Amin  
Imam - Khalid Latif  
Filmmaker - Lena Khan  
Businessman - Moose Scheib  
Fashion Designers - Nyla Hashmi &

Fatima Monkush

Songwriter - Kareem Salama

TV Journalist - Kiran Khalid

- **Time lines (history)**

A timeline of notable Muslim-related events in U.S. history from 1619 to 1934 and from 1957 to 2007.

- **Statistics and Facts**

Some statistics on the extraordinary Muslim American mosaic of ethnic, linguistic, ideological, social, economic, and religious groups.

- **People & Places**

Featured in the photo galleries in this publication are examples of the many contributions Muslims have made to the mosaic of every-day life in the United States.

This publication is available online in HTML and PDF format at <http://www.america.gov/publications/books/being-muslim-in-america.html>

## Distribution of Muslims in the Americas and Worldwide, 2009

### Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life

#### Americas Overview

Pew Research Center's comprehensive demographic study of more than 200 countries finds that there are 1.57 billion Muslims of all ages living in the world today. This represents 23% of an 2009 estimated total world population of 6.8 billion.

There are approximately 4.6 million Muslims living in the Americas, which includes 51 countries and territories. More than half, or about 2.5 million, live in the United States. Canada has more than double the percentage of Muslims compared with the United States. Two percent of Canadians, about 700,000 people, are Muslim; by contrast, 0.8% of the U.S. population is Muslim.

Regionally, Suriname has the largest Mus-

lim population by percentage, with about 16%. Guyana is next with a 7% Muslim population, and Trinidad and Tobago has about 6% Muslim. Argentina, with about 800,000 Muslims, is home to the largest number of Muslims in South America. Less than 1% of Mexico's population is Muslim.

Around 300,000 Muslims in both the United States and Canada are Shias. This number constitutes about 10% of North America's Muslim population.

Full survey results are available at: [http://pewforum.org/uploadedfiles/Orphan\\_Migrated\\_Content/](http://pewforum.org/uploadedfiles/Orphan_Migrated_Content/)

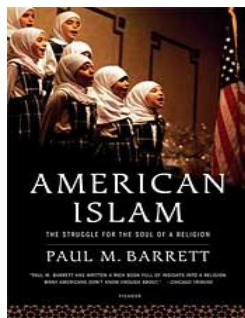
**United States**  
2,454,000 Muslims  
0.8% of Population  
0.2% of World Muslim population





## IRC Books and Articles on Islam and Muslims in the United States

### American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion



Author: Paul M. Barrett.  
Publisher: Picador; 1st edition, 2007, New York.

This is a fascinating and carefully researched portrait of Islam

in contemporary America. A California mosque experiences a surprisingly heated internal debate about whether to host a fireworks celebration on the Fourth of July. Somehow, the "canopies of red, white, and blue that for a moment illuminated the minaret and dome" of the mosque crystallize many of the tensions described by Barrett, particularly how many individuals struggle with being faithful Muslims and patriotic citizens during troubled times.

Barrett's book offers a diverse portrait of Islam in America today, but as he shows, such ideological and racial diversity have not been easy. Pakistani immigrants are sometimes at odds with African-American converts and Sufi spiritualists; feminists draw angry fire as they strive for greater equality; and self-proclaimed progressive Muslims feel at odds as American mosques become increasingly conservative and strident. Barrett is an engaging writer who puts a human face on these issues. While book is remarkably evenhanded, but Barrett is critical in his analysis of the Patriot Act and when discussing a self-starting New York imam who works for justice but also praises Muslim extremists. Balanced and insightful, this grassroots journalistic account mines the complexity and depth of American Islam. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### Beyond Tolerance : Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America

Author: Niebuhr, Gustav.  
Publisher: Viking, 2008, New York.

### Engaging the Muslim World

Author: Cole, Juan Ricardo  
Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, New York.

### Islam in America

Author: Smith, Jane I.  
Publisher: Columbia University Press, c2010, New York.

### Muslims in America : A Short History

Author: Curtis, Edward E., 1970-  
Publisher: Oxford University Press, 2009, New York.

### Who Speaks For Islam? : What a Billion Muslims Really Think

Author: Esposito, John L.  
Publisher: Gallup Press, c2007, New York.

please visit <http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-english/2010/July/20100723164404kcsniggi0.6870233.html?CP.rss=true>

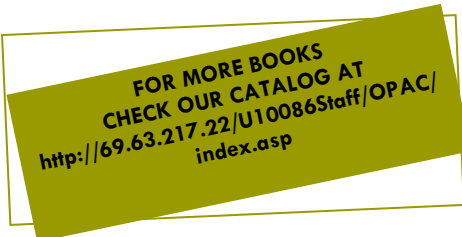
### Obama's 'Spiritual Cabinet' Offers

**Advice and Prayer.** Daniel Burke. The Christian Century. Chicago: Apr 6, 2010. Vol. 127, Iss. 7; pg. 13, 3 pgs

Summary : [...] Obama continues to champion the role of faith in public life, frequently summoning the spirits of Martin Luther King Jr., Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr and even St. Thomas Aquinas to frame his policies in moral terms. [...] as Obama's deputy national security adviser and chief of staff of the National Security Council, McDonough helped craft Obama's landmark address to Muslims last June in Cairo and his robust defense of American foreign policy - including the waging of "just wars" - at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Norway.

**Envisioning Islam: Imam Mohammed and Interfaith Dialogue.** Marsha Snulligan Haney. The Muslim World. Hartford: Oct 2009. Vol. 99, Iss. 4; pg. 608, 27 pgs

Excerpt: "The invitation to participate as a writer in honor of the late Professor David Kerr, and the passing of one of the greatest imam's in U.S. history occurred within the same week. Professor's Kerr academic dedication and active commitment to the promotion of interfaith dialogue within higher education, especially among Christians and Muslims, a value which coincides with my own personal and professional commitment, it was not difficult to select as the focus of this article the leadership of the late Imam W. D. Mohammed (10/30/33-09/09/08) and his contributions to interfaith dialogue."



**Journey into America Highlights Muslim-American Diversity: Akbar Ahmed looks at Muslims in America in new book.** By M. Scott Bortot. America.gov: 26 July 2010

**Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam** tells the story of Ahmed and five of his students as they traverse the country, including the stories they uncover in conversations with Muslim Americans at more than 100 mosques in 70 cities and towns. This story create is a varied portrait of America's several-million-strong Muslim community. For details,

Articles are available through the IRC Online Database. Please feel free to contact us for full text of articles on issues related to the United States.





## Frequently Asked Questions: Muslims in America

### **Are Muslim women allowed to wear a head scarf/hijab together with a long skirt and long sleeves in the United States?**

"Hijabi Monologues" Dispels Stereotypes of Muslim Women.

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-english/2010/March/20100325091607smtotrob0.6598627.html>

Building a Life in America .

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/December/20081218083116jmnamdeirf0.2883264.html>

### **How do American Muslims practice their faith?**

U.S Religious Landscape Survey: Muslim Beliefs and Practices – Pew Research.

Link: <http://religions.pewforum.org/portraits>

### **How can a diverse America be held together without a common doctrine such as Indonesia's doctrine of Pancasila?**

American Identity: Ideas, Not Ethnicity.

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/>

February/20080307154033ebyeessed0.5349237.html

Keeping the Promise of Religious Freedom.

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/>

August/20080819113100cmretrop0.3268701.html

### **Which Muslim sects are represented in the United States?**

U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Affiliations - Pew Research.

Link: <http://religions.pewforum.org/affiliations>

### **Are there pesantren or madrasah or other private Muslim schools in the United States?**

List of Islamic Schools in the United States and Europe.

Link: <http://www.islamicity.com/education/schools.htm>

### **What are the demographics of American Muslims?**

U.S Religious Landscape Survey: Muslim Demographics – Pew Research.

Link: <http://religions.pewforum.org/>

portraits#

Muslims in America – A Statistical Portrait

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/>

December/20081222090246jmnamdeirf0.4547083.html

The Demographics of Faith

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/>

August/20080819121858cmretrop0.5310633.html#ixzz0um9XAC6Y

### **How do American Muslims view pluralism and tolerance?**

I am an American with a Muslim Soul

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/>

December/20081218122422jmnamdeirf0.7670862.html

American Muslims Urged to Increase Community Activism

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-english/2009/>

August/200908031438292SAdemahom0.4340784.html

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